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Choose a Variety of Grains Daily, Especially Whole Grains: A Challenge for Consumers

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“Choose a Variety of Grains
Daily, Especially Whole Grains:
A Challenge for Consumers”

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By Linda S. Kantor,
Jayachandran N. Variyam, Jane
E. Allshouse, Judith J. Putnam,
and Biing-Hwan Lin

For more information, contact
Linda S. Kantor

lkantor@ers.usda.gov

Jayachandran N. Variyam

jvariya@ers.usda.gov

Jane E. Allshouse

allshous@ers.usda.gov

Judith J. Putnam

jputnam@ers.usda.gov

Biing-Hwan Lin

blin@ers.usda.gov

<http://www.ers.usda.gov>

The 2000 edition of

Nutrition and Your Health:

Dietary Guidelines for Americans

is the first to include a specific
guideline for grain foods, sepa-
rate from fruits and vegeta-
bles, and recognize the unique
health benefits of whole

grains. This article describes and evaluates major tools for
assessing intakes of total grains and whole grains, reviews cur-
rent data on who consumes grain foods and where, and
describes individual- and market-level factors that may influence
grain consumption. Aggregate food supply data show that U.S.
consumers have increased their intake of grain foods from
record-low levels in the 1970s, but consumption of whole-grain
foods remains low. Data on individual intakes show that con-
sumption of total grains was above the recommended six
serving minimum in 1994–96, but consumption of whole grains
was only one-third of the three daily servings many nutritionists
recommend. Increased intake of whole-grain foods may be lim-
ited by a lack of consumer awareness of the health benefits of
whole grains, difficulty in identifying whole-grain foods in the
marketplace, higher prices for some whole-grain foods, con-
sumer perceptions of inferior taste and palatability, and lack of
familiarity with preparation methods. In July 1999, the U.S. Food
and Drug Administration authorized a health claim that should
make it easier for consumers to identify and select whole-grain
foods and have a positive effect on the availability of whole-grain
foods in the marketplace. Get this article from the *Journal of*
Nutrition web site at

<http://www.nutrition.org/cgi/content/full/131/2/473S>.

